Occasional Conformity a Wooden-Leg:

OR, THE

OPINION

Of the Present

Arch-Bishop of CANTERBURY,

CONCERNING IT,

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In his Argument for Union, &c. Printed 1683.

THE Most Reverend Author having at large shewn, that the *Dissenters* are not likely to obtain their *Ends* of Establishing themselves, Rooting out Popery, and Promoting the true Religion, *by Overthrowing the Church of* England, concludes with this Important Advice to the whole Body of them.

Do as much as you can do. Do as much as the *Dissenters*, who are most Eminent for Learning, Piety, Preaching, Writing, Experience and Fame, sometimes actually do They have owned owned our *Communion* to be Lawful. They have received the *Communion Kneeling*. They have bred up Children to the *Ministry* of this Church. They have joyned in the *Liturgy*. They have been *Marry'd* according to the Form of it. Nay one, who assisted in making the Directory, would have his own Daugher, in those Times, be Married in the way of *the Book of Common-Prayer*. Do as the Ancient *Nonconformists* did, who would not Separate, tho' they fear'd to Subscribe. Who wrote with such Zeal against those of the *Separation*, that Mr. *Hildersham* was call'd, *The Maul of the* Brownists.

Do more for the Peace of God's Church, than for a Vote or Office, or Fear of Legal Panalty. *Come as Christians to the Sacrament, and not as Politicians.* Those who have so done, and yet break the Unity of the Church, (he means such as are only Occasional Conformists) are said to *use the Arts of Jesuits*, and to be *without all excuse*; by a Dissenter, who Writes with *Commendable Temper*.

Do Constantly what you do upon Occasion. No Preaching or Praying, (which is better liked) can balance the Evil of Separation from a Church, which imposeth no Terms of Communion which are sinful.

For Peace sake let that be more *Constant*, in which your *Conscience* alloweth *Occasional* Exercise. A *Member* who joyns himself to any Establish'd Church, and also to any Churches which are set up, not as Legal Supplements of it, but as Forts against it, (he means *an Occasional Conformists*) seems to be a kind of *Wooden Leg*, if I may represent so Grave a Matter, by so Light a Similitude; he is tyed on, and taken off at Pleasure; he is not, as by Natural Ligaments and Nerves, knit to such Ecclesiastical Bodies. If all would do *Constantly*, what they can in *Conscience* do sometimes, they would create a better Opinion of themselves in the Governours, and move them to all due Favour, and hinder all the Destructive Breaches amongst us.

I am sorry to add, what I believe the Reverend Author did then as little forsee, as he did his own Promotion to *Lambeth*, that this most Unreasonable and Exploded Practice of *Occasional Conformity*, is now grown into great Reputation, is like *Æsops Logg*, that was Exalted to be a Sovereign; our Author's *Wooden Leg*, is become the *Great Diana* of the *Ephesians*.

Olim truncus eram ficulnus, inutile lignum:
Cum Faber incertus scamnum faceretne Priapum,
Maluti esse Deum. Deus inde Ego---- Hor. Satyr. lib. 1 Sat. 8.

'Tis the very *Shibboleth* of the Party; and the Party is now so considerable, that I dare only apply to the Practice, what the Reverend Author says of the Persons; and its well if that Precaution be Security enough against an Action of *Scandalum Magnatum*.

Printed in the Year, M DCC V.

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